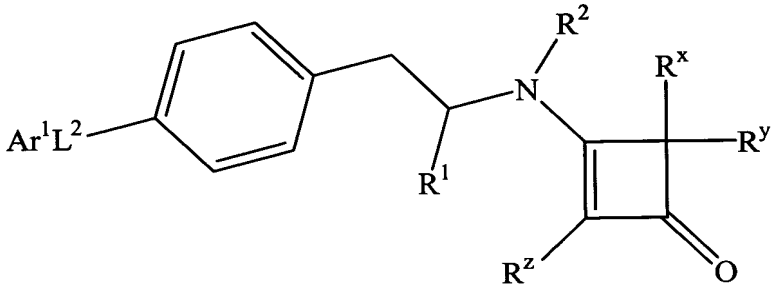
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (1):



(1)

wherein:

Ar^1 is an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic group;

L^2 is a linker group selected from $-N(R^4)-$ ~~[where R^4 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group]~~, $-CON(R^4)-$ and $-S(O)_2N(R^4)-$;

R^4 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group;

R^1 is a carboxylic acid ($-CO_2H$) or ~~a derivative or biostere thereof~~ an acyclic or cyclic carboxylic acid ester, an amide, tetrazole, phosphonic acid, phosphinic acid, sulphonic acid, sulphinic acid, boronic acid, or an acylsulphonamide group;

R^2 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6}alkyl group;

R^x, R^y and R^z, which may be the same or different, are each ~~an atom or group~~ $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ ~~in which~~ , or R^z is $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group;

L^1 is a covalent bond or ~~a linker atom or group~~ an -O-, -S-, or -Se- atom or an -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, $-S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)-$, $-CON(R^8)-$, $-OC(O)N(R^8)-$, $-CSN(R^8)$, $-N(R^8)CO-$, $-N(R^8)C(O)O-$, $-N(R^8)CS-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)O-$, $-ON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-$, or $-N(R^8)SO_2N(R^8)-$ group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group;

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted heteroaliphatic chain containing one to four -O- or -S- atoms or -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)2-, -N(R^8)-, -CON(R^8)-, -OC(O)N(R^8)-, -CSN(R^8), -N(R^8)CO-, -N(R^8)C(O)O-, -N(R^8)CS-, -S(O)2N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)S(O)2-, -N(R^8)O-, -ON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-, or -N(R^8)SO_2N(R^8)- groups that interrupt or are at the terminus of the aliphatic chain~~,~~ ;

R^3 is a hydrogen or halogen atom or group selected from -OR^{3a} ~~[where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group]~~, -SR^{3a}, -CN and an optionally substituted cycloaliphatic, heterocycloaliphatic, polycycloaliphatic, heteropolycycloaliphatic, aromatic or heteroaromatic group~~,~~ ;

R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group;

n is zero or the integer 1; and

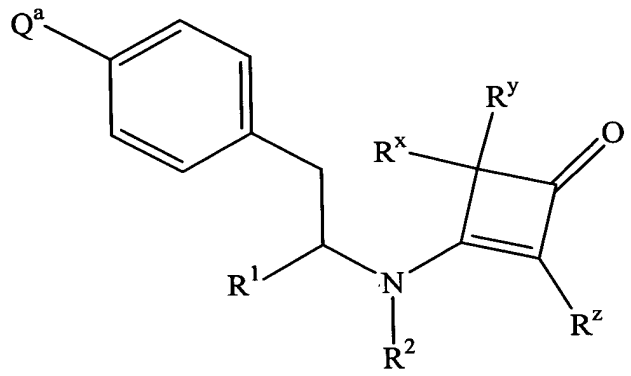
v is the integer 1, 2 or 3;

provided that when n is zero and L^1 is a covalent bond, v is the integer 1;

~~or R^z is an atom or group as previously defined and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group~~;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof;

which comprises reacting a compound of formula (2):



(2)

wherein:

Q^a is a group $-N(R^4)H$;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof;

with a compound Ar^1W wherein

W is a group selected from X^1 ~~(wherein X^1 is a leaving atom or group)~~, $-COX^2$ ~~(wherein X^2 is a halogen atom or a -OH group)~~ and

$-SO_2X^3$ ~~(in which X^3 is a halogen atom);~~

X^1 is a leaving atom or group;

X^2 is a halogen atom or a -OH group; and

X^3 is a halogen atom.

2. (original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in a solvent in the presence of an acid when W is the group X^1.

3. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 2 wherein the solvent is selected from an alcohol, ether, acetic acid, water, acetonitrile, substituted amide and ester.

4. (original) A process according to Claim 2 wherein the reaction is carried out in an alcohol in the presence of an acid catalyst.

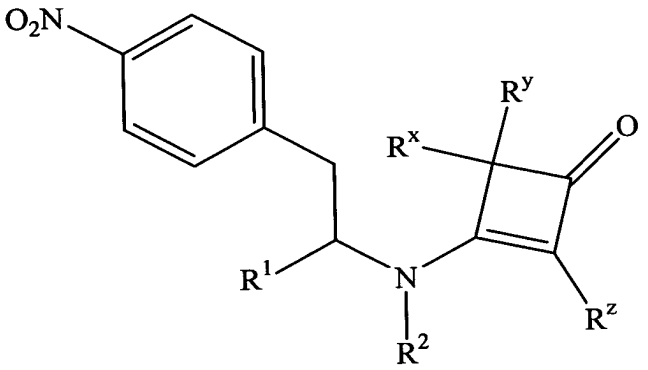
5. (original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of a base, an organic amine or a cyclic amine and an organic solvent when W is the group COX^2 and X^2 is a halogen atom.

6. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 5 wherein the organic solvent is selected from a halogenated hydrocarbon, a dipolar aprotic solvent, an ether and an ester.

7. (original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of a condensing agent and a halogenated hydrocarbon, dipolar aprotic or an ether solvent when W is the group CO_2H.

8. (original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of a base, an organic amine or a cyclic amine and a halogenated hydrocarbon, dipolar aprotic or an ether solvent when W is the group SO_2X^3.

9. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (2) is prepared by reduction of a compound of formula (4):

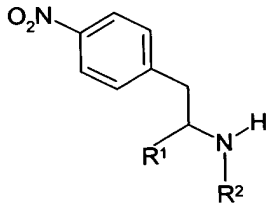


(4)

10. (original) A process according to Claim 9 wherein the reduction is carried out by catalytic hydrogenation or by chemical reduction.

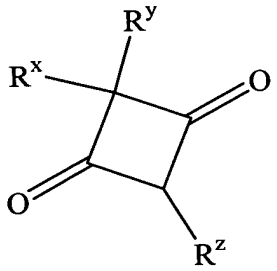
11. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 wherein R^4 is a hydrogen atom.

12. (original) A process according to Claim 9 wherein the compound of formula (4) is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula (5):



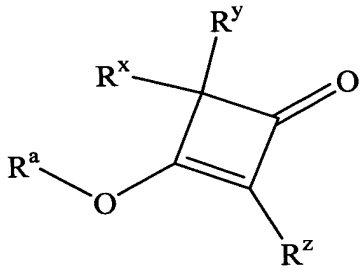
(5)

with a compound of formula (6a) or (6b):



(6a)

or



(6b)

wherein R^a represents a C_{1-6}alkyl group or a silyl group.

13. (original) A process according to Claim 12 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of an organic solvent.

14. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 13 wherein the solvent is selected from an aromatic hydrocarbon, a halogenated hydrocarbon and an ester.

15. (currently amended) A process according to Claim 1 wherein R^1 is the group $-CO_2Alk^7$; and

Alk^7 is a straight or branched optionally substituted C_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-8}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-8}alkynyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}heterocycloalkyl group, an

optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}heterocycloalkylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted hydroxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylthioC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylsulfinylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylsulfonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylthioC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylsulfinylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylsulfonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonylC_{1-6}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C_{1-8}alkylaminoC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-C_{6-12}aryl-N-C_{1-6}alkylaminoC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C_{1-8}alkyl-carbamoylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted heteroC_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aryl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aryloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylthioC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylsulfinylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylsulfonylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-8}alkanoyloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{4-8}imidoC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aroyloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, or a triglyceride.

16. (canceled)

17. (currently amended) A process according to ~~Claim 16~~ Claim 1 which comprises hydrolysing a compound of formula (1) in which R^1 is $-CO_2Alk^7$ and Alk^7 is a straight or branched optionally substituted C_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-8}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-8}alkynyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyl

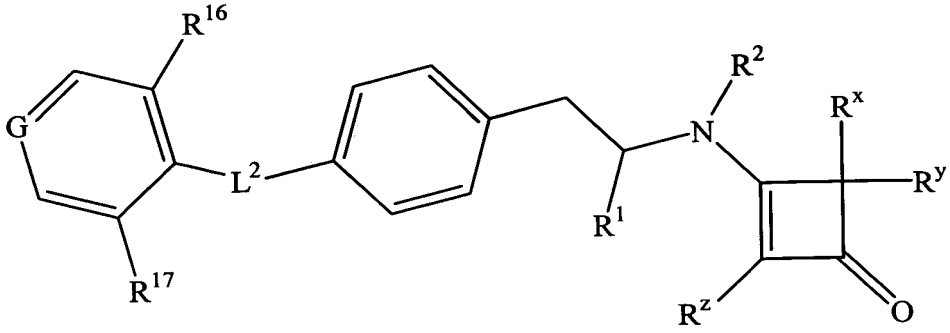
group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}heterocycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}heterocycloalkylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted hydroxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylthioC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylsulfinylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkylsulfonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylthioC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylsulfinylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkylsulfonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonylC_{1-6}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyloxycarbonyloxyC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C_{1-8}alkylaminoC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-C_{6-12}aryl-N-C_{1-6}alkylaminoC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C_{1-8}alkyl-carbamoylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted heteroC_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aryl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aryloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylthioC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylsulfinylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}arylsulfonylC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{1-8}alkanoyloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{4-8}imidoC_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{6-12}aroyloxyC_{1-8}alkyl group, or a triglyceride,

to produce a compound of formula (1) in which R^1 is $-CO_2H$.

18. (currently amended) A process according to ~~Claim 16~~ Claim 1 which comprises esterifying a compound of formula (1) in which R^1 is $-CO_2H$ to produce a compound of formula (1) in which R^1 is $-CO_2Alk^7$ and Alk^7 is a straight or branched optionally substituted C_{1-8}alkyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-8}alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C_{2-}

8alkynyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8heterocycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkylC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8heterocycloalkylC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkyloxyC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted hydroxyC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkylthioC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkylsulfinylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkylsulfonylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkyloxyC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkylthioC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkylsulfinylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkylsulfonylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkyloxycarbonylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkyloxycarbonylC1-6alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkyloxycarbonyloxyC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-6alkyloxycarbonyloxyC1-6alkenyl group, an optionally substituted C3-8cycloalkyloxycarbonyloxyC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C1-8alkylaminoC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-C6-12aryl-N-C1-6alkylaminoC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted N-di-C1-8alkyl-carbamoylC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12arylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted heteroC6-10arylC1-6alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12aryl group, an optionally substituted C6-12aryloxyC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12arylthioC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12arylsulfinylC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12arylsulfonylC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C1-8alkanoyloxyC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C4-8imidoC1-8alkyl group, an optionally substituted C6-12aroyloxyC1-8alkyl group, or a triglyceride.

19. (currently amended) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of compounds of formula (1b):



(1b)

wherein

-G= is $-CR^{18}=$, -N= or -N(O)=;

R^{16}, R^{17} and R^{18}, which may be the same or different, are each a hydrogen atom or ~~an atom or group~~ $-L^3(Alk^2)_tL^4(R^5)_u$;

L^3 and L^4 are, independently, a covalent bond, an -O- or -S- atom, or a -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, $-S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)-$, $-CON(R^8)-$, $-OC(O)N(R^8)-$, $-CSN(R^8)$, $-N(R^8)CO-$, $-N(R^8)C(O)O-$, $-N(R^8)CS-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)O-$, $-ON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-$, or $-N(R^8)SO_2N(R^8)-$ group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group;

t is zero or the integer 1;

u is an integer 1, 2 or 3;

Alk^2 is an optionally substituted aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted heteroaliphatic chain containing one to four -O- or -S- atoms or -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, $-S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)-$, $-CON(R^8)-$, $-OC(O)N(R^8)-$, $-CSN(R^8)$, $-N(R^8)CO-$, $-N(R^8)C(O)O-$, $-N(R^8)CS-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)O-$, $-ON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-$, or $-N(R^8)SO_2N(R^8)-$ groups that interrupt or are at the terminus of the aliphatic chain;

R^5 is a hydrogen or halogen atom or an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyl, optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyl, $-OR^6$, $-SR^6$, $-NR^6R^7$, $-NO_2$, -CN, $-CO_2R^6$, $-SO_3H$, $-SOR^6$, $-SO_2R^6$, $-SO_3R^6$, $-OCO_2R^6$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-OCONR^6R^7$, $-CSNR^6R^7$, $-COR^6$, $-OCOR^6$,

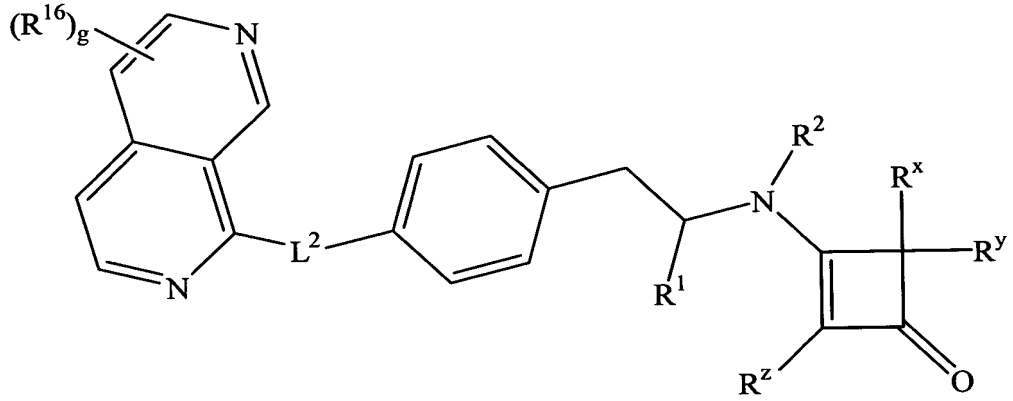
-N(R6)COR7, -N(R6)CSR7, -SO2N(R6)(R7), -N(R6)SO2R7, N(R6)CON(R7)(R19), -N(R6)CSN(R7)(R19), or -N(R6)SO2N(R7)(R19) group; and

R6, R7, and R19 are, independently, a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted C1-6alkyl or C3-8cycloalkyl group;

provided that when t is zero and each of L3 and L4 is a covalent bond, then u is the integer 1 and R5 is other than a hydrogen atom;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

20. (currently amended) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of compounds of formula (1d):



(1d)

wherein

g is the integer 1, 2, 3 or 4;

R16, is ~~an atom or group~~ -L3(Alk2)tL4(R5)u;

L3 and L4 are, independently, a covalent bond, an -O- or -S- atom, or a -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)2-, -N(R8)-, -CON(R8)-, -OC(O)N(R8)-, -CSN(R8), -N(R8)CO-, -N(R8)C(O)O-, -N(R8)CS-, -S(O)2N(R8)-, -N(R8)S(O)2-, -N(R8)O-, -ON(R8)-, -N(R8)N(R8)-, -N(R8)CON(R8)-, -N(R8)CSN(R8)-, or -N(R8)SO2N(R8)- group;

R8 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C1-6alkyl group;

t is zero or the integer 1;

u is an integer 1, 2 or 3;

Alk^2 is an optionally substituted aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted heteroaliphatic chain containing one to four -O- or -S- atoms or -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)$_2$-, -N(R^8)-, -CON(R^8)-, -OC(O)N(R^8)-, -CSN(R^8), -N(R^8)CO-, -N(R^8)C(O)O-, -N(R^8)CS-, -S(O)$_2$N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)S(O)$_2$-, -N(R^8)O-, -ON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-, or -N(R^8)SO$_2$N(R^8)- groups that interrupt or are at the terminus of the aliphatic chain;

R^5 is a hydrogen or halogen atom or an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyl, optionally substituted C_{3-8}cycloalkyl, -OR^6, -SR^6, -NR^6R^7, -NO$_2$, -CN, -CO$_2R^6$, -SO$_3$H, -SOR^6, -SO$_2R^6$, -SO$_3R^6$, -OCO$_2R^6$, -CONR$^6R^7$, -OCONR$^6R^7$, -CSNR$^6R^7$, -COR^6, -OCOR^6, -N(R^6)COR^7, -N(R^6)CSR^7, -SO$_2$N(R^6)(R^7), -N(R^6)SO$_2R^7$, N(R^6)CON(R^7)(R^{19}), -N(R^6)CSN(R^7)(R^{19}), or -N(R^6)SO$_2$N(R^7)(R^{19}) group; and

R^6, R^7, and R^{19} are, independently, a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted C_{1-6}alkyl or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group;

provided that when t is zero and each of L^3 and L^4 is a covalent bond, then u is the integer 1 and R^5 is other than a hydrogen atom;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

21. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of:

ethyl (2*S*)-2-[(2-bromo-3-oxospiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-yl)amino]-3-{4-[(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)amino]phenyl}propanoate;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

22. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of:

ethyl (*2S*)-2-(2-bromo-3-oxo-spiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-ylamino)-3-[4-([2,7]naphthyridin-1-ylamino)phenyl]propanoate;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

23. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of:

ethyl (2*S*)-2-[(2-isopropylsulfanyl-3-oxo-7-oxa-spiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-yl)amino]-3-[4-([2,7]naphthyridin-1-ylamino)phenyl]propanoate;

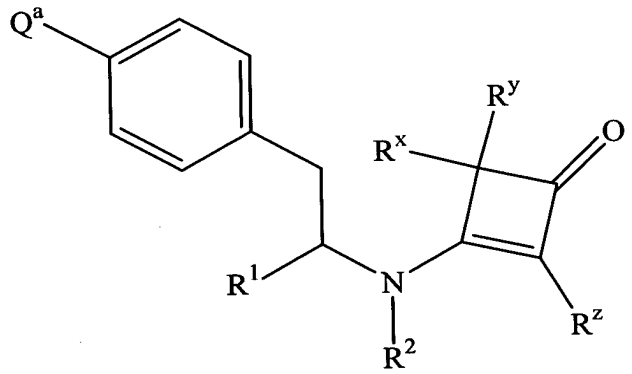
and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

24. (previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 for the preparation of:

2-hydroxyethyl (*2S*)-2-(2-bromo-3-oxo-spiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-ylamino)-3-{4-[(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)amino]phenyl}propanoate;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

25. (currently amended) A compound of formula (2):



(2)

wherein:

R^1 is a carboxylic acid ($-CO_2H$) or ~~a derivative or biostere thereof~~ an acyclic or cyclic carboxylic acid ester, an amide, tetrazole, phosphonic acid, phosphinic acid, sulphonic acid, sulphinic acid, boronic acid, or an acylsulphonamide group;

R^2 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6}alkyl group;

R^x, R^y and R^z, which may be the same or different, are each ~~an atom or group~~ $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ ~~in which~~ , or R^z is $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group;

L^1 is a covalent bond or ~~a linker atom or group~~ an -O-, -S-, or -Se- atom or an -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)2-, $-N(R^8)-$, $-CON(R^8)-$, $-OC(O)N(R^8)-$, $-CSN(R^8)$,

-N(R^8)CO-, -N(R^8)C(O)O-, -N(R^8)CS-, -S(O)$_2$N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)S(O)$_2$-, -N(R^8)O-, -ON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-, or -N(R^8)SO$_2$N(R^8)- group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group; ~~;~~

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted heteroaliphatic chain containing one to four -O- or -S- atoms or -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)$_2$-, -N(R^8)-, -CON(R^8)-, -OC(O)N(R^8)-, -CSN(R^8), -N(R^8)CO-, -N(R^8)C(O)O-, -N(R^8)CS-, -S(O)$_2$N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)S(O)$_2$-, -N(R^8)O-, -ON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-, or -N(R^8)SO$_2$N(R^8)- groups that interrupt or are at the terminus of the aliphatic chain;

R^3 is a hydrogen or halogen atom or group selected from -OR^{3a} ~~[where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group]~~, -SR^{3a}, -CN and an optionally substituted cycloaliphatic, heterocycloaliphatic, polycycloaliphatic, heteropolycycloaliphatic, aromatic or heteroaromatic group~~;~~ ;

R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group;

n is zero or the integer 1; and

v is the integer 1, 2 or 3;

provided that when n is zero and L^1 is a covalent bond, v is the integer 1;

~~or R^z is an atom or group as previously defined and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro-linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group;~~

Q^a is a group –N(R^4)H;

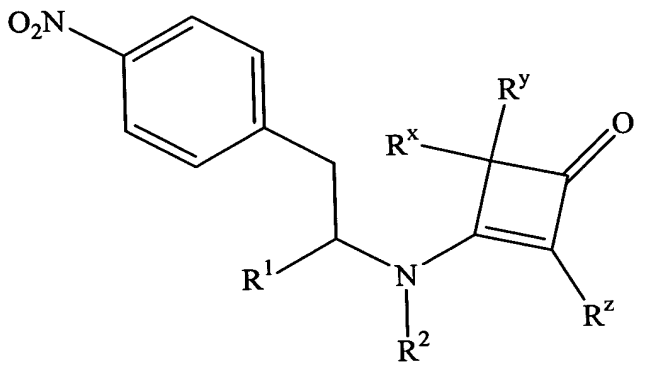
R^4 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

26. (original) A compound according to Claim 25 which is:

3-(4-aminophenyl)-2(S)-(3-oxo-7-oxaspiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-ylamino)-propionic acid hydroxyethyl ester.

27. (currently amended) A compound of formula (4):



(4)

wherein:

R^1 is a carboxylic acid ($-CO_2H$) or ~~a derivative or biostere thereof~~ an acyclic or cyclic carboxylic acid ester, an amide, tetrazole, phosphonic acid, phosphinic acid, sulphonic acid, sulphinic acid, boronic acid, or an acylsulphonamide group;

R^2 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6}alkyl group;

R^x, R^y and R^z, which may be the same or different, are each ~~an atom or group~~ $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ ~~in which~~, or R^z is $-L^1(Alk^1)_n(R^3)_v$ and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group;

L^1 is a covalent bond or ~~a linker atom or group~~ an -O-, -S-, or -Se- atom or an -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, $-S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)-$, $-CON(R^8)-$, $-OC(O)N(R^8)-$, $-CSN(R^8)$, $-N(R^8)CO-$, $-N(R^8)C(O)O-$, $-N(R^8)CS-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)S(O)_2-$, $-N(R^8)O-$, $-ON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)N(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CON(R^8)-$, $-N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-$, or $-N(R^8)SO_2N(R^8)-$ group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group; ;

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted heteroaliphatic chain containing one to four -O- or -S- atoms or -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -OC(O)-,

-C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)2-, -N(R^8)-, -CON(R^8)-, -OC(O)N(R^8)-, -CSN(R^8), -N(R^8)CO-, -N(R^8)C(O)O-, -N(R^8)CS-, -S(O)2N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)S(O)2-, -N(R^8)O-, -ON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)N(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CON(R^8)-, -N(R^8)CSN(R^8)-, or -N(R^8)SO2N(R^8)- groups that interrupt or are at the terminus of the aliphatic chain;

R^3 is a hydrogen or halogen atom or group selected from -OR^{3a} ~~[where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group]~~, -SR^{3a}, -CN and an optionally substituted cycloaliphatic, heterocycloaliphatic, polycycloaliphatic, heteropolycycloaliphatic, aromatic or heteroaromatic group~~,~~ ;

R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted straight or branched C_{1-6}alkyl group or C_{3-8}cycloalkyl group;

n is zero or the integer 1; and

v is the integer 1, 2 or 3;

provided that when n is zero and L^1 is a covalent bond, v is the integer 1;

~~or R^z is an atom or group as previously defined and R^x and R^y are joined together to form an optionally substituted spiro-linked cycloaliphatic or heterocycloaliphatic group;~~

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and N-oxides thereof.

28. (original) A compound according to Claim 27 which is:

3-(4-nitrophenyl)-2(S)-(3-oxo-7-oxaspiro[3.5]non-1-en-1-ylamino)propionic acid hydroxyethyl ester.